

# NEW MEXICO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



September - November 2012 Newsletter

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## SANDIA PUEBLO HERP SURVEY 2012



ZANE DOHNER



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Members of the New Mexico Herpetological Society closed the traps on the plains at Sandia Pueblo on Saturday, November 9. Eleven adult herpers and one baby herper braved the windy forty-six degree weather (and, in one case, a recent knee replacement!) to collect all the lids and cover board to the traps. Sticks and rocks were placed into the buckets so that animals that fall in can climb out. We also were able to pull out several *Uta*-sicles! Herpers celebrated afterwards with some great food at El Pinto.



ZANE DOHNER



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Counter clockwise from upper left: Rincon ridge; The plains we survey; Sue & Ted Brown, Josh, Nikki & Chloe Emms, Garth Graves, Nancy Bush, Scott Bulgrin, Jean & Dave Burt & August Breithaupt; Three of several *Uta Stansburiana Stejnegeri*. For more pictures from the year of surveying, visit our website at: <http://nmherpsociety.org/activities/traps2012/index.html>



# HERPER SPOTLIGHT: NICOLETTE EMMS



Nikki in Nara Visa

**How did you get into herping?** My husband, Josh, wanted to go look for snakes and I decided that it would be better if I went with him in case he got bit by a rattlesnake. I could drive him to the hospital. So, I went with him. We even went road cruising. One night on our way home, Josh saw a snake on the side of the road. We got back to the car and I said, "What was it?" When he told me it was a Prairie Rattlesnake, I said, "I want to see it!" So, we went back to see it and it was gone. Shortly before that we had gone on the NMHS spring field trip to Nara Visa. I went out every day and night of that trip and I found it fascinating! It peaked my interest in herps. So, for my birthday, Josh wanted to take me to the Grand Canyon, but I wanted In'n'out Burger as well, so we headed to Kingman, Arizona. There we hiked around and found Zebra-tailed Lizards, Tiger Whiptails, a Long-nosed Leopard Lizard and even got a glimpse of a Chuckwalla! That night we drove to Flagstaff, on my birthday. I was super tired and wanted to get to the motel ASAP, when I found a stick in the road, that didn't quite



The Prairie Rattlesnake that Nikki missed out on

look like a stick. I asked Josh if that was a stick and he said he didn't see it. So, I turned the car around and in the middle of our lane: black-white-black-white. A California Kingsnake! One of our targets! We took it back to the motel and went to sleep. She was the first snake I ever held! Then at the Grand Canyon the next day we found a Gopher Snake on the rim, but the one trip that sealed the deal was our trip to the Gila where we met up with Bill Gorum, Chris Newsom, Erik McCormick and some other random people. Chris took us up a talus slope that almost killed us all and I remind him of it almost every time I see him! There we



The California Kingsnake that Nikki found on her birthday

found our first Banded Rock Rattlesnake! I fell in love!

**How long have you been a member of NMHS?**

About four years.

**Do you keep herps?** Yes, I have five snakes: a Great Basin Gophersnake, a Western Coachwhip, a Ghost Corn, two Desert Kingsnakes and a Trans-pecos Ratsnake! My husband takes care of them though...

**Do you field herp?** Sure do!

**What is your favorite herp to work with?** I really like our Patchnose and our Corn Snakes.

**What was your most memorable find?** We were in Utah for Father's Day and we needed to get some



Above: The Gophersnake Nikki found at the Grand Canyon Below: The Gophersnake that Nikki found in Utah.

herping in so we went up the canyon near my childhood home. We pulled off into small side canyon near the pass. We started looking around and Josh chased a racer right away. I saw downed drift fence shortly after photographing the racer. I thought, they always say they find stuff under artificial cover, so I



Nikki with a Banded Rock Rattlesnake in the Gila

lifted it expecting to find a Gartersnake, but instead found a practically black, four foot Gophersnake! So I yelled to Josh that I had found a Bullsake! He told me to grab it, so it wouldn't get away. As I had never caught a snake, I was a little apprehensive, but I reached down and grabbed it.

**If you could take a herping trip anywhere in the world, where would you go?** Africa, so I could find an African Snouted Cobra!

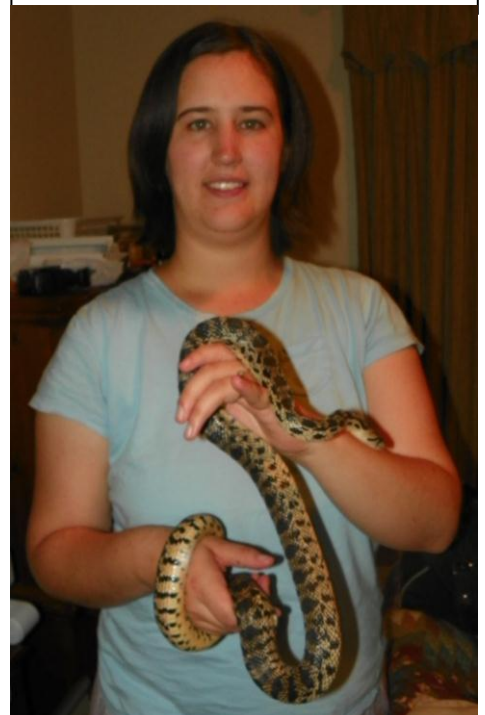
**If you could keep any herp in the world, what would it be?** A Reticulated Python, but they are just too darn big!

**What other interests do you have in nature?**

Birds, deer elk, moose, fishing, camping, hiking

**Who would you like us to spotlight in the next newsletter?** August Breithaupt

Next newsletter will feature a spotlight on August Breithaupt. If you have any questions you would like to ask him, email me at: [joshemms@hotmail.com](mailto:joshemms@hotmail.com)





## FALL FIELD TRIP REPORT – BITTER LAKE



This year for our fall field trip we went to the Dragonfly Festival at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The event was attended by Scott Bulgrin, Dave & Jean Burt and Gabriele Elli.



Some animals were located road cruising and the society did a display at the refuge. Dr. Brady Barr did a presentation in Roswell in conjunction with the event and Scott talked to him and gave him a society T-shirt. The rain came down, like it did on most of the state that weekend, and therefore, there were not many reptiles out, but there were some amphibians. A good time was had by all who attended.



Photos courtesy of: Gabriele Elli, Scott Bulgrin, Dave & Jean Burt





# FESTIVAL OF THE CRANES



Many herpers took some of their animals down to the annual Festival of the Cranes at the Bosque del Apache



National Wildlife Refuge. We had a wide array of critters from across the state. Herpers that participated were: Ted & Sue Brown, Scott & Logan Bulgrin, Dave & Jean Burt, Josh, Nikki & Chloe Emms, August Breithaupt, Nancy Bush and Jerry Tuttle. Ted Brown



reported, "We recorded a total of 921 visitors to our display - 711 on Saturday and 210 on Sunday. We gave away a lot of goodies, tattoos, rubber critters and even those nice new



'Turtles of New Mexico' posters from NM Game & Fish." He also added, "Sue and I stayed a tad longer, took the northern loop drive and found a very DOR and flattened *Rhinocheilus lecontei tessellatus* on the tour. So -- a good day for all." We

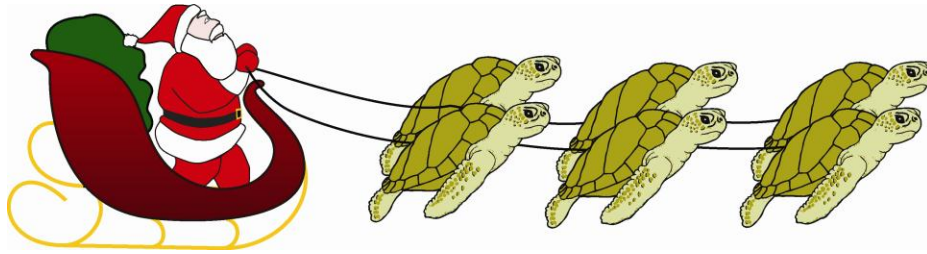


had a lot of people come through and had a lot of positive experiences with them. Jerry Tuttle brought his Gila Monster, "Picasso" and his



Gray-banded Kingsnake. There was a lot of interest in the Gila Monster. There were several people who touched a snake for the first time. This is a very good way to promote reptile conservation to the public!





## CHRISTMAS BANQUET – DECEMBER 8

This year's Christmas Banquet will be at Garcia's. Our guest speaker will be Bill Love. Festivities will begin at the Rattlesnake Museum at 6:00pm. We will enjoy one another's company and then mozy on over to Garcia's at 7:00pm for dinner. During dinner we will have the silent auction items out to look at and make bids on. Please bid early and often! All proceeds will go to the society. Following dinner, Bill Love will be our speaker.

### BILL LOVE

All photos courtesy of Bill Love and used by permission!



"I'm an easy-going, freelance photographer with over 39 years' experience specializing in wildlife imagery. I'm a friendly and jovial guy who dresses casually and works on digital projects in my home office and studio ... You'll appreciate the perfection I always strive for in my 'fun time' pursuits because it carries over to the work I'd like to do." - Bill Love. We are very lucky to have such an accomplished photographer for our guest speaker this year. Bill will also be doing a photography workshop which will cost \$15.00. Please contact Scott Bulgrin if you want to attend the workshop as seats will be limited.



## MEETING & ACTIVITY NOTES



**December 8 – Photography Workshop** with Bill Love at 1:30pm at the Botanical Park-Farmhouse (2601 Central NW, 87104), the cost will be \$15.00.

**December 8 – Back area tour** of the Rio Grande Zoo (903 10<sup>th</sup> Street). Time to be announced.

**December 8 – Happy Hour** at the Rattlesnake Museum (202 San Felipe NW Suite A) from 6:00pm to 7:00pm

**December 8 – Christmas Banquet** at 7:00pm at Garcia's at 1736 Central SW. Bill Love will be our speaker. There will be a silent auction with a large amount of items. We have a huge lot of books that were purchased by the society for real cheap. The cost will be \$20.00.

**January 3 – Monthly Meeting** at the Rattlesnake Museum (202 San Felipe NW Suite A) at 7:00pm

**February 7 – Monthly Meeting** at the Rattlesnake Museum (202 San Felipe NW Suite A) at 7:00pm

**March 7 – Monthly Meeting** at the Rattlesnake Museum (202 San Felipe NW Suite A) at 7:00pm

**April 4 – Monthly Meeting** at the Rattlesnake Museum (202 San Felipe NW Suite A) at 7:00pm



## NEWS IN THE WORLD OF HERPS



### Bizarre tentacled snakes born at National Zoo

For the first time in more than a decade, a group of tentacled snakes was born at the Smithsonian's National Zoo.

The eight baby snakes, which sport little feelers on their noses, were born Oct. 21 after four years of unsuccessful breeding attempts, the zoo announced Thursday (Nov. 8).

The unusual aquatic species from Southeast Asia is not endangered, but researchers say it's poorly understood. The creatures, referred to as *Erpeton tentaculatus* in the scientific community, are relatively small, growing to about 20-35 inches in length, and they're the only snakes with two short tentacles on their snouts, which allow the reptiles to sense vibrations from fish that swim by.

[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-205\\_162-57547191/bizarre-tentacled-snakes-born-at-national-zoo/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-205_162-57547191/bizarre-tentacled-snakes-born-at-national-zoo/)

### NEW THREE-FINGERED FROG DISCOVERED

On a trek across this Atlantic rainforest reserve in southern Brazil, biologist Michel Garey recalled how on his birthday in 2007 he chanced upon what turned out to be a new species of tiny, three-fingered frogs.

"I was doing research with two friends on a hilltop in the reserve and I stumbled into this unusual frog with only three fingers," he told a small group of reporters this week on a tour of Salto Morato, a nature preserve owned by Brazil's leading cosmetic firm Boticario.

"It happened on February 14, 2007: My birthday. What a treat!" he said.

But it was not until June this year that the discovery of this new species -- *Brachycephalus tridactylus* -- was officially established. A report on his finding was published in *Herpetologica*, a quarterly international journal focusing on study and conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

"At the time I was doing some other work related to ecology and I figured I could wait as no one else doing frog research would have access to the area," Garey said.

"It took me 18 months from early 2011 to collect seven of the new frogs, go to museums to compare them with other species, realize that they were new, write my paper and have it published in the journal."

The tiny *brachycephalus tridactylus* was found at an altitude of around 900 meters (3,000 feet). Its most striking feature is the absence of a fourth finger, which Garey attributes to an evolutionary process rather than to environmental effects.

<http://news.discovery.com/animals/htree-fingered-frog-121103.html>



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